



## **PATH: Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope ~**

*A celebratory route  
For exploring ways  
To realize a socially important vision  
In a complex and dynamic environment.  
Which can include:*

- committing to a collective purpose,
- having to deal with significant conflicts,
- moving out of the hidey-hole of merely complaining,
- having to consider big changes in the way we do things,
- shifting power arrangements, renegotiating roles and rules,
- actively encouraging the sharing of intuition, insight and wisdom,
- often surprising and exciting,
- sharing solutions to problems,
- hard, meaningful, yet potentially satisfying work.

### **Thus, A PATH is:**

A powerful tool to get people unstuck and into action, and set the framework for a detailed plan of action that emerges through the hard work and commitment of the pathfinders.

### **A PATH involves a distinct mindset ~Please take the time to prepare yourself for the following:**

- Make a commitment to yourself to refrain from judgement so that true, clear listening can take place. Be prepared to listen to others for genuine understanding. Rather than arriving with a belief that you already understand other participants' ideas or position, come prepared to ask "How can I understand that person better?", or "I wonder what it would be like to be him?"
  - Please do everything in your power to commit for the entire time.
  - .Do your best to use ordinary language so that everybody understands everything.
- Bring an open mind and an open heart, and be prepared to laugh and not take ourselves too seriously; this work is serious enough, we don't have to be..

A PATH is creative, energetic, full of paradox and contradiction, human, dynamic, full of laughter (and sometimes tears) as well as uncertainties, A PATH can be life-giving, life-changing, scary, risky, hard work.....

***and a tool to explore and document the way to a definable dream.***



have eight steps ~

1. **"The North Star"** : identifying shared values that serve to guide us and help us find our way forward and keep us moving in the right direction. Based on these values, we will describe in detail the desired future of our system in the next 3-5 years
  2. **NAMING the GOALS:** here we collectively determine the concrete goals necessary to move us toward the future described in the North Star. We will identify multiple goals, and set an overall timeframe of between 12-18 months.
  3. **Grounding in the NOW:** this is the opportunity to discuss the realities, perceived obstacles and frustrations we currently face based on environmental and resource related conditions at this time. The tension that emerges between the desired future and the current reality is harnessed to move us forward.
  4. **Identifying people to ENROLL for support:** Here all pathfinders in the room have the opportunity to publicly declare their commitment to making this future a reality. It is also the place where we identify and list others who are not present, but must be engaged in order to accomplish the goals. This is where the "to do's" start emerging. For example, when a specific individual is identified as needing to be contacted and brought on board, a pathfinder will be identified and will commit to making the contact by a specific date.
  5. **Recognizing ways to BUILD STRENGTH:** As a group, how will we gather and sustain the strength and support to bring this PATH to fruition? This is an opportunity to mend fractures in realtionships among group members and to begin a fresh and powerful collaboration toward the identified future
  6. **Charting Action for the Next Few Months:** Exactly what it says, getting into more detail about what exactly needs to happen in the immediate future. Again, every task has someone in the room who is responsible, with a target date, AND another member in the room will agree to follow up with the responsible party to add another level of accountability. Calendars are open here
  7. **Committing to the FIRST STEP:** Exactly what will happen, by who and by when. How will outcomes of the first step be shared with the group?
  8. **Achieving Closure** through sharing our honest opinions about what we have just accomplished, and any other relevant feedback or general "housekeeping".

*PATH was developed by Jack Pierpoint, Marsha Forest and John O'Brien almost 20 years ago. It has been used extensively all over the world as a planning process for individuals, families, organizations, systems, and communities. You can purchase the PATH manual at [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)*